

If you cannot see my mirrors

I cannot see you.

How many of you have ever heard that before? That is one of the basics to know for anyone that drives around or near a commercial motor vehicle.

Now as a person that has done countless driver evaluations I will ask a driver when he/she is sitting in a nice comfortable position to tell me what they see in the right and left mirror.

How much if any of the trailer do you see in each mirror?

To no surprise to myself the answer back is the wrong answer. First off they see way too much of the front of the trailer. There is little or no benefit to seeing the front of the trailer. You must see what is beside you both on the left and right side.

The biggest blind spot is the one that is behind the transport unit. When a demonstration is set up most drivers are surprised how big that blind spot is and how much can be hid behind the back of the transport unit and the first vehicle that comes in line with either the left and right mirror. Not all drivers have the luxury of a back up camera and many that do ignore using it for some strange reason. I find that a veteran driver most times does not get out of the truck to look before backing. Yes sounding the horn or using the backup beeper is good but it is not the total solution to safe backing.

Know the blind spots around a truck and keep out of the blind spots for your safety.

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**Good judgment
comes from
experience.
Experience
comes from bad
judgment.
Author Unknown**

**Drivers Safety
Meeting
It is time to think
about booking
your fall/winter
drivers safety
meeting.**

*Check out our website
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How do you handle phone calls from motorists that shares the road with your drivers?

In the last 6 months I had 3 occasions that I contacted a safety department of a trucking company. The first time I followed a truck out of Kitchener to the 401. The trailer did not have functioning brake lights. This is a major Out Of Service Defect on an MTO inspection.

The second time I was leaving the GTA when I seen a driver of a commercial vehicle not once but numerous times tailgate a car, pull out into the 3rd lane to pass slower moving traffic, usually the driver action included a blast of the air horn.

The last scenario again leaving the GTA and noticed the truck ahead of me slowing down and speed back up. Nothing unusual in this going from 427 to Huron Ontario but I noticed the tractor brake lights working and not the trailer brake lights.

What did I do? The first 2 I phoned the carrier. I was unable to speak with anyone in safety. So I left a short message with my observation and included my name and telephone number.

The third fleet I opted for sending an e mail message.

I have to admit that I am at times naive, or my expectations of people are too high. I was once told that I take safety too serious. Anyway I heard nothing from any of the 3 fleets. The last scenario was 2 days after a truck crash on the 400 that involved numerous vehicles and killed 3 people.

If you have not noticed the image of the trucking industry is not what it once was and something has to be done at the carrier level. As a side bar to this I have been informed of 5 Careless Driving charges to professional drivers in a matter of 6 weeks. Right or wrong this is the way the enforcement has chosen to fix the problem.

Being in the industry for over 40 years I have seen a few ads for drivers and one common item in the ads are the words SAFETY & CULTURE. In each case this was only one driver from each of the 3 fleets. I am not 100% naive and my impression from the driver's behavior is there is a safety problem. Even more is I have to ask myself did this matter get addressed with the drivers involved.

Last of all I believe that the carrier should have had the courtesy to return my phone call and tell me that they will investigate the incident and thank me for the call. At the same time the carrier should place this driver on the list of potential high risk drivers before a Careless Driving charge with this driver is on their to do list.

Transportation Safety and Compliance

Tips for Safe Driving at Night

- Condition of Other Drivers. Late in the evening and during the early morning hours is when you are most likely to meet fatigued or impaired drivers. Be alert for motorists that are driving aggressively or erratically during these times. Maintain a safe distance from these drivers and be prepared to stop. If a vehicle comes into your lane head-on, slow down and move your vehicle as far to the right as you can. Never take evasive action into an oncoming lane of traffic.
- Reduce Your Speed
- Fatigue, combined with less available light, reduces vision and reaction time. Reduce your speed when driving at night and especially on unfamiliar roads. Maintain a four second interval when following the vehicle ahead as a space cushion.
- Make sure your headlights are properly aimed. During your pre and post trip inspections make sure that your lights are operational and clean. **See & Be Seen**
- Don't overdrive your headlights. Especially when driving on smaller roads without reflector strips, follow a four-second rule. Take note of where the far reach of your low beams are, then count four seconds. If you pass that original place in less than four seconds, then you are going too fast. Two to three seconds may be an acceptable range for major highways with reflector strips. Remember that posted speed limits are for driving in daylight with dry road conditions.
- Use high beams wisely. The use of high-beam headlights when there isn't oncoming traffic can extend the time that you have to react to hazards. Never use your high beams because the high beams of the oncoming car stay on. This will only increase the chances of a head-on crash.
- Don't look at oncoming headlights. Focus on the edges of oncoming traffic and bright objects, as staring directly into headlights can blind you for up to five seconds until your eyes adjust.
- Look around. Keep your eyes moving from side to side, rather than focusing only on the centerline and the road ahead, to help your eyes stay adjusted to the dark and avoid falling victim to "highway hypnosis," a state in which reaction time is greatly impaired.
- Wear sunglasses during the day. Wearing sunglasses during bright days helps keep your eyes more sensitive for driving in the dark.
- If you're tired, get off the road and sleep. If you feel sleepy, caffeine can never be a substitute for sleep, nor is loud music or rolling down the windows. Pull over and rest, and stop every two to four hours for a break out of your vehicle even if you're not feeling sleepy. Don't set out on a trip tired.

TEAMWORK

"Teamwork divides the task
and doubles the success." Author Unknown

What is Happening in Roundabouts?

Well for starters in the Waterloo Region they are not going away. I am not going to even attempt to figure out how many have been added in Waterloo Region. I think that in Cambridge on Franklin Blvd there are more there now than KW has on Ira Needles.

There has been conversation that Ottawa and Homer Watson in Kitchener will get a roundabout and Fountain St at Maple Grove in Cambridge have roundabouts in the future of the landscape of those streets.

Now do not get me wrong I believe that roundabouts are the way to go in some scenarios.

Professional truck drivers will argue that roundabouts are too small and a truck must straddle the lanes to negotiate. I cannot argue that point.

Look at a roundabout as another type of an intersection. What is the purpose of an intersection (lights and stop signs) by the way a railway crossing is an intersection? The purpose is to control traffic and that means slowing the traffic down. Hence the introduction of small roundabouts.

When I am with a driver I will start a discussion on how they feel about roundabouts. In my part of the conversation I will share some facts that when a roundabout is introduced often times these intersections are high collision frequency intersections. Very often the collision frequency will increase when the intersection is switched to a roundabout but within time collisions will decline. I also give a comparison that often times at a cross street intersection a collision is unfortunately often times a crash that will involve medical attention. Whereas at a roundabout the collision is often times a fender bender and likely no medical attention required and maybe not even a tow away. This in itself is a positive for insurance rates and medical costs.

Suggestions to safely maneuver a roundabout are: When you see a roundabout ahead look for the black and white sign that indicates which lane is yours and stay in that lane. Traffic is approaching from your left; however pedestrian may come from your right, look both directions. **NEVER PASS ANY VEHICLE** in the roundabout. Slow down to the posted speed limit. Last of all look out for the other driver's.